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United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/94 on Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues. On 19 May 2017, the Secretary-General sent notes verbales to all Member States, drawing their attention to the relevant provisions contained in resolutions 71/91 to 71/94 and requesting information by 14 July 2017 concerning any action taken or envisaged in relation to their implementation. Replies were received from Israel and Mexico to the requests contained in paragraph 4 of resolution 71/91, paragraph 4 of resolution 71/92, paragraphs 12 to 30 of resolution 71/93 and paragraph 4 of resolution 71/94.

* A/72/150.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 71/94 on Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues.

2. On 19 May 2017, the Secretary-General sent notes verbales to all Member States, including Israel, drawing their attention to the relevant provisions of resolutions 71/91 to 71/94 and requesting information by 14 July 2017 of any action taken or envisaged in relation to their implementation.

II. Replies received

Israel

[Original: English]
[26 July 2017]

The Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations has the honour to refer to his note concerning resolutions 71/91 to 71/94, adopted by the General Assembly on 6 December 2016, under the agenda item "United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East".

Israel decided, once again, to vote against these resolutions, owing to their apparent political motive and the fact that they represent a one-sided view which fails to reflect the reality on the ground.

Israel supports the humanitarian activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), in line with its original and primary mandate of aiding the refugees and carrying out the direct relief and works programmes.

Nevertheless, Israel remains deeply concerned regarding the Agency's persistent use of humanitarian funding for the purpose of advocacy. Israel is troubled by the Agency's perpetuation of a one-sided narrative about the conflict in our region, with the refugees serving as the primary means of achieving this goal.

Instead of focusing on relief and humanitarian assistance, UNRWA chooses to promote a controversial political agenda. One example is the Agency's proactive campaigns supporting the so-called "right of return" for millions of Palestinians. The question of Palestinian refugees has not been agreed between Israel and the Palestinians and can be resolved only through direct bilateral negotiation between the parties. It is unacceptable for a United Nations agency to actively promote the agenda of one side of the conflict. The Agency's advocacy in this regard is inappropriate and undermines efforts to achieve a political solution.

Unfortunately, along with the Agency's use of humanitarian funding for the purpose of political campaigns, we have witnessed through the years many examples of misconduct by the Agency and its employees.

Recently, UNRWA personnel have even been found within the ranks of the internationally designated terrorist organization, Hamas. In February 2016, Israeli authorities revealed that the Chairman of the UNRWA Staff Union in the Gaza Strip and Principal of the UNRWA boys' elementary school for refugee children, Suhail al-Hindi, had been elected to the political bureau of Hamas. This is the same al-Hindi who was suspended in 2011 by UNRWA after meeting with Hamas leader Ismail Hania. His suspension lasted only three months, after which al-Hindi was allowed to return to his prior position. Likewise, Muhammad al-Jamasi, head of the

UNRWA engineering department, was also reportedly elected to the Hamas political bureau.

At first, UNRWA denied the allegations regarding its employees. Only after being confronted with irrefutable evidence of their terrorist connections did the Agency suspend al-Hindi and al-Jamasi, providing no further information on the circumstances of their dismissal. Moreover, only when publicly questioned about the incident by Israel's Mission to the United Nations did the UNRWA Commissioner-General, Pierre Krähenbühl, confirm al-Hindi's dismissal. Even then, the Commissioner-General attempted to minimize the offence, claiming that al-Hindi was dismissed because he "ran for an elected office".

These are just two recent examples of misconduct by UNRWA. The Agency's employees have often engaged in egregious acts, including calls to commit acts of violence against Israelis on social media.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]
[13 July 2017]

The Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations has the honour to refer to the communication of the Department of Political Affairs dated 19 May 2017, concerning the request for information on the implementation of resolutions 71/92 and 71/94 on the topic "Operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East".

In that connection, the Permanent Mission has the honour to submit the following reply on the national measures taken to implement the said resolutions:

- Mexico recognizes the efforts of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to improve the living conditions and promote the human development of Palestinian refugees by providing education and health services.
- The Government of Mexico supports the efforts of UNRWA to meet the needs of the Palestinian refugee population. Accordingly, its annual voluntary contribution to the Agency amounted to $250,000 in both 2016 and 2017.